

W.W. 0 QPR 1

Givens 'gem' pips Wanderers

A CRACKING goal from some 25 yards from Republic of Ireland international Don Givens was all that stood between Wycombe Wanderers and the full Queens Park Rangers first team in Saturday's friendly for Dave Clement's Testimonial Fund (writes Stuart Earp).

Wanderers, showing vastly improved form, gave as good as they got from the First Division professionals and can count themselves unlucky not to have drawn.

Rangers brought down their full first team squad as promised but full back Clement must have been slightly disappointed with their 2,000 plus crowd. The fans in turn must have been disappointed with the football produced by Q.P.R. Only a handful of the players seemed to

put in 100 per cent effort and stars like Stan Bowles showed all-too-rare glimpses of the form that makes them international players. No fewer than nine of the Rangers side had played for their various countries.

Goalscorer Givens and John Hollins got through most work in the side but Gerry Francis, former England skipper, spent only the first 17 minutes on the field before being replaced by Steve Williams, a £60,000 signing from Bury.

After Wycombe's last performance at Witney, I was worried Saturday's game might produce a cricket score but Wanderers

rose to the occasion and gave an excellent display. John Priestley returned to midfield and gave the side a more solid look while the 4-4-2 formation operated by the Blues hid some of their weakness upfront.

At the back, Keith Mead and Alan Phillips used all their experience to break up many Rangers raids while Paul Birdseye, who had an excellent game at right back, kept England winger, Dave Thomas pretty quiet.

GAME RUINED

Although the friendly provided a certain amount of enter-

tainment, it was ruined, to my mind, by one incident in the second half. Tony Horseman was right through with only the goalkeeper to beat when centre half Dave Needham hauled him back by the shirt — tearing it in the process. Treated a 'professional foul,' it was totally out of place in this game and caused a good deal of understandable anger amongst the supporters.

Wanderers might have got off to a dream start in the very first minute when Priestley netted after a clever run by Dylan Evans. Tony Horseman's cross was side-footed home by

Priestley but the goal was ruled out for offside.

Given plenty of time to play by Rangers, Wanderers put together some useful attacks and goalkeeper Phil Parkes was kept busy. At the other end John Maskell saved at point blank range from Peter Eastoe while Don Masson twice blasted the ball over the top.

Several half-time changes brought more urgency to Rangers' somewhat lackadaisical approach and they went ahead after 58 minutes with a stunning goal. Birdseye headed a cross out to Givens who was 30 yards from goal. Taking a few steps forward, he unleashed a fierce drive into the top corner. No goalkeeper would have saved that one.

A minute later it should have been 1-1 when Graham Mackenzie put Birdseye through inside the box. His first cross was cut out but he returned the ball high to the far post where Evans' header struck an upright. The rebound was then lobbed over the top by the same player.

Then came the shirt pulling incident which injected some fire into the match for a ten minute spell. Wycombe again went close when Dave Richardson saved well from Evans while at the other end Peter Spittle kept out a Thomas drive with his legs.

The final quarter saw the match petering out when one might have expected Rangers' superior fitness to take its toll. In fact, they finished the game at half pace while Wycombe were unable to test Richardson again.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell (aub P. Spittle 45 mins); P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies, H. Kennedy, G. Mackenzie, J. Priestley, W. Roberts, A. Horseman, D. Evans, Sub G. Brown (not used).

Q.P.R.: P. Parkes (sub D. Richardson 45 mins); D. Clement (sub D. Shanks 45 mins), D. Webb, D. Needham, I. Gillard; J. Hollins, D. Masson (sub D. Thomas 45 mins), G. Francis (sub S. Williams 19 mins); S. Bowles, P. Eastoe, D. Givens.

Half-time: 0-0. Goalscorer, Q.P.R. — Givens (58).
Referee: D. Hedges (Oxford).
Attendance: 2,250.



Q.P.R. and Scotland midfield player Don Masson cracks a volley over the top during Wycombe's 1-0 defeat at Loakes Park on Saturday.